

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A dual bridge matrix converter comprising:
 - 2 (a) a high DC link line and a low DC link line;
 - 3 (b) a line-side converter having three input lines
4 connectable to a three-phase AC power system to receive AC power
5 therefrom and connected to the DC link high and low lines to provide
6 unidirectional power thereto, the line-side converter including three gate
7 controlled switching devices, each gate controlled switching device
8 connected from each side thereof by anti-parallel oriented diodes to one
9 of the input lines and each switching device connected by a diode to the
10 DC link high line and by a diode to the DC link low line;
 - 11 (c) a load-side converter connected to receive power from
12 the DC link lines and having three output lines on which three-phase
13 power is provided, the load-side converter comprising gate controlled
14 switching devices connected in a bridge configuration with pairs of the
15 switching devices connected between the DC link high line and low line
16 and with junctions between the pairs of switching devices connected to
17 the output lines;
 - 18 (d) a controller connectable to receive the AC voltages
19 provided to the line-side converter and providing control signals to switch
20 the switching devices of the line-side converter and the load-side
21 converter with pulse width modulated control for AC output voltages on
22 the output lines of the load-side converter; and
 - 23 (e) a clamp circuit connected between the DC link high
24 line and the DC link low line, the clamp circuit including a series

25 connected diode and capacitor with the diode arranged to conduct current
26 from the high DC link line to the low DC link line.

1 2. The converter of Claim 1 wherein the clamp circuit
2 further includes a gate controlled switch connected in parallel with the
3 clamp diode.

1 3. The converter of Claim 2 wherein the gate controlled
2 switch connected in parallel with the clamp diode is an IGBT connected
3 so as to conduct when turned on in anti-parallel to the clamp diode.

1 4. The converter of Claim 2 wherein the controller
2 provides gate control signals to a gate of the switch connected in parallel
3 with the clamp diode to turn the switch on to conduct when the voltage
4 across the clamp capacitor is above a threshold voltage that is greater
5 than the normal peak-to-peak voltage across the input lines and to turn
6 off the switch to a non-conducting state when the voltage across the
7 clamp capacitor is lower than the threshold voltage.

1 5. The converter of Claim 1 further including an input
2 filter connected between the AC power system and the input lines of the
3 line-side converter, the input filter comprising series connected inductors
4 and parallel connected capacitors.

1 6. A converter comprising:
2 (a) a DC link high line and a DC link low line;
3 (b) a line-side converter having input lines connectable to
4 an AC power system to receive AC power therefrom and connected to
5 the DC link lines to provide unidirectional power thereto, the line-side

6 converter including multiple gate controlled switching devices and diodes
7 connected between the input lines and the DC link high and low lines to
8 provide controlled unidirectional power from the input lines to the DC link
9 lines;

10 (c) a load-side converter connected to receive power from
11 the DC link lines and having output lines on which AC power is provided,
12 the load-side converter comprising multiple gate controlled switching
13 devices connected in a bridge configuration between the DC link lines and
14 the output lines and controllable to provide AC power on the output lines;

15 (d) a clamp circuit connected between the DC link high
16 line and the DC link low line, the clamp circuit including a series
17 connected diode and capacitor with the diode arranged to conduct current
18 from the DC link high line to the DC link low line and to block current in
19 the other direction, and a gate controllable clamp switch connected in
20 parallel with the clamp diode; and

21 (e) a controller providing a control signal to the clamp
22 switch to turn the clamp switch on to conduct current from the clamp
23 capacitor to the DC link high line when the voltage across the clamp
24 capacitor is above a threshold voltage that is greater than the normal
25 peak-to-peak voltage across the input lines and to turn off the clamp
26 switch when the voltage across the clamp capacitor is lower than the
27 threshold voltage.

1 7. The converter of Claim 6 further including a controller
2 connectable to receive the AC voltages provided to the line-side converter
3 and providing control signals to switch the switching devices of the line-
4 side converter and the load-side converter with pulse width modulated

5 control for AC output voltages on the output lines of the load-side
6 converter.

1 8. The converter of Claim 7 wherein the controller that
2 provides control signals to the switching devices of the line-side converter
3 and the load-side converter also comprises the controller that provides
4 control signals to the gate of the clamp switch.

1 9. The converter of Claim 6 wherein the gate controlled
2 switch connected in parallel with the clamp diode comprises an IGBT
3 connected to conduct current when turned on in a direction anti-parallel to
4 the direction of conduction of the clamp diode.

1 10. The converter of Claim 6 wherein the line-side
2 converter has three input lines to receive three-phase AC power from a
3 three-phase AC power system, and wherein the load-side converter has
4 three output lines to provide three-phase AC power.

1 11. A method of controlling a dual bridge matrix converter
2 of the type having a DC link high line and a DC link low line, an input-side
3 converter connected to receive AC input power and connected to provide
4 unidirectional power to the DC link lines and having controllable switching
5 devices to control the unidirectional power supplied to the DC link lines,
6 and a load-side converter connected to the DC link lines to receive power
7 therefrom and having output lines on which AC output power is provided,
8 the method comprising:

9 (a) providing a clamp circuit across the DC link lines
10 having a series connected diode and a capacitor, and a controllable switch
11 connected in parallel with the clamp diode;

12 (b) when the voltage across the clamp capacitor is above
13 a threshold that is higher than a normal peak-to-peak AC input voltage,
14 turning on the clamp switch to discharge the clamp capacitor and conduct
15 current through the switch to the load-side converter; and

16 (c) when the voltage across the clamp capacitor is below
17 the threshold voltage, turning off the clamp switch and maintaining the
18 clamp switch off as long as the voltage across the clamp capacitor is less
19 than the threshold voltage.